

**UTAH DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP MEETING
MARCH 5, 2007**

Members Present

Corrections Representatives: Annabelle Evans, Conducting; Jack Ford, Colleen Gabbitas, Thomas Patterson, Sandi Haslam, Dave Calder

FOCUS Group Representatives: Marilyn West, Marianne Johnstone, Judy Price, Lilas Park, Stephanie Peterson, Russ Durler, Barbara Durler, DeRae Preston, Ann Larsen, Rose Vance, LeAlma Rhoades, Larry Wininger

Special Guest / Speakers: ACLU Director Karen McCreary, Executive Director, Thomas E. Patterson

Welcome: Annabelle Evans welcomed those in attendance and introduced the guest speaker, Executive Director, Thomas E. Patterson. Director Patterson was appointed Executive Director for the Utah Department of Corrections on January 5, 2007. Prior to this appointment, Mr. Patterson served as the Executive Director for the Commission On Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ). Director Patterson received his undergraduate degree from BYU and his Juris Doctorate degree from Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas. He served as Rush County Attorney, Chief Administrative Law Judge and legal counsel with the Utah Department of Workforce Services, and Executive Director of the Utah Sentencing Commission within CCJJ.

Executive Director, Thomas E. Patterson-

Tom's administration will focus on open communication with all people effected by Correction's presence in the community. Tom is looking forward to his new assignment and feels it is a position of great trust. Open relationships are built on a foundation of trust. One of his administration's goals is to reduce recidivism through treatment, care and education.

The recent Legislative Audit gave us suggestions of ways we can improve. We are trying to make employees heard and are making necessary changes. We are creating developmental opportunities for employees as well as making some personnel changes.

Questions were taken from those in attendance at the meeting:

Stephanie Peterson, ACLU: With the changes in management positions, what are the new priorities being established? Greater involvement of HR which will result in the department being less fragmented. HR will report directly to Tom, as will the internal audit department. There will be a greater focus on programming, with the goal being no gaps in service, greater accountability and visibility in the community. Funding for treatment is insufficient at the present time and getting treatment dollars will be an ongoing process, year in and year out.

Larry Wininger, Workforce Services: Does CCJJ or any government group have the appointed responsibility to coordinate and meet with those in charge of treatment, or to act in the capacity of a steering committee? Representatives of substance abuse and sex offender programs need to partner with agencies who have appropriate resources so that we will not deplete our own resources. There is nothing organized at the present time with this specific function in mind. Tom will talk with AP & P and see what resources are most needed in integrating inmates back into the community. Larry Wininger will give informational packet called "Re-Entry Tools" to Tom as a resource.

Director Patterson believes that good things can come of the Adam Walsh Act. We have three years in which to come into compliance. We have decided to wait until the next legislative session, even though doing so may exact a financial price tag. Creating a restrictive zone in which sex offenders may live forces them out of the cities and away from supportive or treatment resources. This will be an issue for probation and parole. We were able to get the bill changed so that it focuses on the sex offender's behavior rather than where he/she lives. We may need to rely on citizen involvement to assist us.

The fingerprinting, BCI and concealed weapons departments are understaffed and their processing is backed up. Tom said this issue was not adequately addressed in this session of the legislature. We want sex offenders to be known but we only have ¼ to 1/8 the needed manpower to staff these programs.

Marianne Johnstone: How does the function of this FOCUS group compare with the Advisory Board that used to exist which met quarterly and reviewed questions and input from the community? Sometimes the FOCUS group representatives feel like they find all information out "after the fact" and their input is not considered in the decisions that are made. Annabelle asked if the group felt they were losing ground at the FOCUS and Mini-FOCUS group meetings. If issues are not addressed internally, there is the chance that individuals will go outside the department to remedy problems, resulting in solutions that may not be good for the department as a whole, but only for the specific individuals experiencing the symptoms of their particular problem. Tom asked what other faces would be at the table if we had an Advisory Board that were not currently being represented. Suggestions were lawyers, doctors or dentists, NAACP, AP&P, DIO representatives. Tom suggested that he could attend this FOCUS meeting quarterly if that would be helpful.

The question was asked of Director Patterson, "What are we doing well?" His response was that he believed we have an extraordinarily dedicated group of people in management positions, who are working 70-80 hours a week, and who are very loyal to the department. They are truly dedicated to making a difference. We are fortunate to have the high quality of people we do, given the salaries we are able to pay. Tom believes that public safety is at a higher level than in previous times. Escapes are down. We are doing well with the budget cuts that have been put in place. Laws are being passed that hand down longer sentences but which do not make provisions for adequate funding to house inmates for longer periods of time. Our medical services are great and

provide the opportunity for inmates to be healthier than ever before in their lives, but costs for health care have escalated. We are beginning to have aging issues at the prison. Medical expenses in this area are growing rapidly. At the present time we are only able to put a band-aid on how we are funding their medical treatment. This will continue to be a problem in the future.

Lilas Park, Courtwatch: How can we as citizens change the attitude that sex offenders are lower class people? Tom responded that we need to get the message out that treatment DOES work. We cannot minimize the awful effects of these crimes on families. We have to focus on the reality that 90% of sex offenders are known to the victim(s) and the family. What we are doing in our families and neighborhoods is of vital importance if we are going to release these offenders back into the community. We need to be as rational as possible. We need adequate bed space to accommodate the increased penalties being handed out. An example was brought up about an inmate whose case was overturned. Tom agreed to expedite the process of having names removed from the sex offender registry of those who are acquitted.

We received funding for DORA, thanks to the efforts of Senator Butters.
We have to improve our recidivism rate. The rate in Utah is quite high. If we can educate inmates, we are better served.

DeRae Preston, DLC raised the question of shackling inmates in cases of giving birth and in the instance of “actively dying.” The policy has recently been changed for women during labor and while giving birth. In the circumstance of actively dying or serious, major surgery, the issue of shackling still needs to be addressed.

Colleen Gabbitas said that at the May Mini-FOCUS meeting it would be decided whether or not to continue the meetings or if contacting people directly as questions arise is sufficient.

Minutes of Last Meeting: Minutes were approved.

Agenda for next meeting: Bring to the table any policy issues you would like addressed. Send tickler to Sandi to put on the agenda. Steve Caverley will address geriatric population issues & mental health medication.

Next Meeting:

The next FOCUS meeting will be held Monday, May 7, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the Region III Adult Probation & Parole office, 36 West Fremont Ave. (1100 South), Salt Lake City, Utah.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.